IMT Nuremberg Archives

H – 3788

International Court of Justice

H3788 – 0002

Secret

M 116

Report on Interview with Herr Hess by Wing Commander the Duke of Hamilton on Sunday, 11th May, 1941.

At dusk on Saturday 10th May while Wing Commander the Duke of Hamilton was on duty in the Turnhouse Sector Operations Rooms an enemy aircraft was plotted off the coast of Northumberland at 2208 hours and made a landfall close to Farne Islands. The Wing Commander received a report from the Observer Corps that the enemy aircraft was an Me. 110, which he thought a mistaken identification as this fighter type of aircraft had only once before been seen as far north as Northumberland (On August 15), and without extra fuel tanks could not make return flight.

The enemy aircraft flew west and at 2256 hours was plotted as flying north-east 3,000' over Ardrossan. Plots turned south and then north and again round to west when they finally faded a few miles south of Glasgow at 2307 hours.

Normal action had been taken to intercept and shoot down the enemy aircraft. A few minutes after plots faded an A.A.Site reported that an aircraft had crashed in flames. A Defiant fighter in hot pursuit was approximately 4 miles away and it was with disappointment that the Wing Commander learnt that its guns had not been fired. Later it was reported that the enemy aircraft had crashed two miles from Eaglesham close to the Mearns Road and that it was definitely an Me.110. A German having baled out had been captured.

The German prisoner gave his name as Alfred Horn and stated to the Home Guard and Police that he was on a "special mission" to see the Duke of Hamilton and had intended to land at Dungavel. Where the crash occurred is 12 miles from Dungavel in the constituency of East Renfrewshire, which the Duke of Hamilton represented for over nine years and where he was well known.

On being given this information the Wing Commander arranged to accompany the official Interrogating Officer to the place where the prisoner was confined.

Personal report by Wing Commander the Duke of Hamilton

On Sunday 11th May at 10.00 hours I arrived at Maryhill Barracks with the Interrogating Officer, who first examined the effects of prisoner. These included Leica camera, photographs of himself and small boy and some medicines, also visiting cards of Dr. Karl Haushofer and his son, Dr.Albrecht Haushofer.

I entered the room of the prisoner accompanied by the Interrogating Officer and the Military Officer on guard.

The prisoner, who I had no recollection of ever having seen before, at once requested that I should speak to him alone. I then asked the other officers to withdraw, which they did.

The German opened by saying that he had seen me in Berlin at the Olympic Games in 1936 and that I had lunched in his house. He said, "I do not know if you recognise me but I am Rudolph Hess." He went on to say that he was on a mission of humanity and that the Fuhrer did not want to defeat England and wish to stop fighting. His friend Albrecht Haushofer, had told him that I was an Englishman who, he thought, would understand his(Hess's) point of view. He had consequently tried to arrange a meeting with me in Lisbon (see Haushofer's letter to me dated September 23rd, 1940). Hess went on to say that he had tried to fly to Dungavel and this was the fourth time he had set out, the first time being in December. On the three previous occasions he had turned back owing to bad weather. He had not attempted to make this journey during the time when Britain was gaining victories in Libya, as he thought his mission then might be interpreted as weakness, but now that Germany had gained successes in North Africa and Greece, he was glad to come.

The fact that Reich Minister, Hess, had come to this country in person

B 039773

H3788 – 0003

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL
NURNBERG, GERMANY
GB Exhibit 269
Filed Feb 7, 1946

B 039774

H3788 - 0004

would, he stated, show his sincerity and Germany's willingness for peace. He went on to say that the Fuhrer was convinced that Germany would win the war, possibly soon but certainly in one, two or three years. He wanted to stop the unnecessary slaughter that would otherwise inevitably take place. He asked me if I could get together leading members of my party to talk over things with a view to making peace proposals. I replied that there was now only one party in this country. He then said he could tell me what Hitler's peace terms would be. First, he would insist on an arrangement whereby our two countries would never go to war again. I questioned him as to how that arrangement could be brought about, and he replied that one of the conditions, of course, is that Britain would give up her traditional policy of always opposing the strongest power in Europe. I then told him that if we made peace now, we would be at war again certainly within two years. He asked why, to which I replied that if a peace agreement was possible the arrangement could have been made before the war started, but since, however, Germany chose war in preference to peace a time when we were most anxious to preserve peace, I could put forward no hop a peace agreement now.

He requested me to ask the King to give him "parole", as he had come unarmed and of his own free will.

He further asked me if I could inform his family that he was safe by sending a telegram to Rothacker, Hertzog Stra.,17 Zurich, stating that Alfred Horn was in good health. He also asked that his identity should not be disclosed to the Press.

Throughout the interview, Hess was able to express himself fairly clearly, but he did not properly understand what I was saying and I suggested that I should return with an interpreter and have further conversation with him.

From Press photographs and Albrecht Haushofer's description of Hess, I believed that this prisoner was indeed Hess himself. Until this interview I had not the slightest idea that the invitation in Haushofer's letter to meet him (Haushofer) in Lisbon had any connection at all with Hess.

4139)

22nd January, 1946.

Certified that the text set out above and entitled "Report on Interview with Herr Hess by Wing Commander the Duke of Hamilton on Sunday, 11th May 1941" is a true copy of a document held in the files of H.M. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London.

David Maxwell Fyfe

Deputy Chief Prosecutor for United Kingdom

B 039775

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL

M 116

H-3788

C. D. EXHIBIT

GB 269

B 039772

H3788 – 0005

H3788 – 0006

2. Pages